

# Nuclear Waste and Old Laces

In the historic Flemish city of Bruges, famous its medieval buildings and lace craftsmanship, top nuclear experts and regulators met to discuss the future of environmental remediation and radioactive waste management.

Global partnering for the the nuclear sector was the focus of the five-day 11th *International Conference on Environmental Remediation and Radioactive Waste Management* (ICEM '07). At a time when preoccupations for the environment and energy security are driving a renewed interest in nuclear power, more needs to be done to promote international cooperation and share information and experience amongst authorities and companies within the nuclear sector itself as well as with the public.

Setting up global environmental partnerships and cooperative agreements is essential to demonstrate good governance in a society that demands to be actively informed and participate in the decision-making process around nuclear issues. As Anibal Taboas, Conference General Chair, reminded the audience of, in today's society, education, energy, the environment and the economy are inextricably linked,



The IAEA's Hans Forsström delivering his keynote speech in Bruges. Photo: ICEM'07

and the nuclear sector has an invaluable opportunity to recast the way it is perceived throughout the world.

Focusing on uranium mine and mill remediation issues, the *Uranium Mining Remediation Exchange Group* (UMREG) Roundtable also took place during ICEM '07. During the roundtable, Peter Waggitt, a consultant in mining environmental issues, reported on the IAEA Central Asian Project, which is looking at developing a regulatory framework and a plan of action to deal

with legacy problems in former Soviet sites. "Good progress has been made so far, and I am happy to be able report that the situation is not as bad as originally estimated," Waggitt commented. "However, it is still too early to draw a conclusion for the project."

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*The 11th International Conference on Environmental Remediation and Radioactive Waste Management (ICEM'07) was held in Bruges, Belgium, from 2-6 September 2007.*